

AWARDING GUNNERY SERGEANT
RICHARD HALL A CONGRES-
SIONAL VETERAN COMMENDA-
TION

HON. PAT FALLON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 7, 2022

Mr. FALLON. Madam Speaker, I am honored and privileged to award Gunnery Sergeant Richard Hall, United States Marine Corps with a Congressional Veteran Commendation. His service and sacrifice through the United States Marine Corps exemplify his national pride and embodiment as a role-model citizen to serve the country he loves. Gunnery Sergeant Hall is truly an ideal candidate to receive the Congressional Veteran Commendation.

During his years of military service in the Marine Corps, Gunnery Sergeant Hall has served in a plethora of incredibly important positions such as a Marine rifle, infantry leader, communications, recruiting duty, a combat leader in Vietnam where he spent 23 continuous days in battle, as well as the Two Tours of Combat Duty. Not only is his dedication to his country shown through 23 straight days of warfare, but to serve one's Nation for twenty-one straight years is very admirable. Gunnery Sergeant Hall has also shown his adaptability by serving in many locations around the world such as San Diego Naval base, Camp Pendleton, Japan, Dallas, Vietnam, Texas Recruiting Center, and Pacific Command Hawaii with Weapons protection command. After serving for twenty-one years, Gunnery Sergeant Hall retired in 1975 with many awards including the Bronze Star Medal with combat "V" device; and was awarded two Purple Hearts for battle wounds.

I am beyond honored to have Gunnery Sergeant Hall in Texas' 4th Congressional district and am privileged to award such a distinguished citizen for his sacrifices.

HONORING PASTOR LANCE BAILEY

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 7, 2022

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today as a descendant of Bahamians to recognize Pastor Lance Bailey for his contribution to the City of Miami's designation of the Little Bahamas of Coconut Grove on July 19, 2022.

Since the 19th century, Bahamians played an integral role in the founding of the City of Miami, representing one-third of the registered signatories on July 28, 1896, the date of the city's incorporation.

Much like Miami's original Bahamian signatories, Pastor Lance Bailey's commitment to preserving the rich Bahamian culture and history of Miami has helped to ensure the designation of the Little Bahamas of Coconut Grove.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Pastor Lance Bailey for his contributions to the community and his role in the historic designation of the Little Bahamas of Coconut Grove.

S. 3969, PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR VOTING ACCESS PROGRAM INCLUSION ACT

HON. RODNEY DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 7, 2022

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I must say that I am perplexed by the Chairwoman's statements on the COCOA Act. Her interpretation of the COCOA Act is misleading and inaccurate. There have been instances in past election cycles where election officials were not aware of Congress' role and responsibility in having its own observers on site to watch the election administration process and, as a result, were denied access. As I stated earlier, this bill fixes a bi-partisan problem by providing a citation of convenience for existing law that gives the House authority to deploy official observers to watch the conduct of congressional elections in the States and territories. This way, there is no question regarding Congress' authority to have observers present.

To my surprise, the Chairwoman identifies two late breaking concerns she has with the bill. First, she states that while the bill provides broad authority to Congress, it fails to provide election officials with the ability to protect personally identifiable information. This concern appears to be a novel one, particularly in light of the long history of the Congressional observer program. We certainly would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss it further in our multiple efforts to work with majority staff on this topic.

Second, the Chairwoman expresses concern over an election official's inability to remove congressional observers that are disruptive to the process. Contrary to the Chairwoman's statement, the bill outlines the role of congressional observers and specifically prohibits these individuals from handling ballots, elections equipment, advocating for a position or candidate, taking any action to reduce ballot secrecy, or otherwise interfering with the elections administration process. The bill also permits state and local authorities to remove any observer who misbehaves. As such, state and local election officials across the country would have appropriate protections in place and should not be distressed by the presence of congressional observers.

Over the course of the past two years, my staff made a concerted effort to engage majority staff on the COCOA Act as we view this as a bi-partisan measure. We provided draft language to them for review. They did not reference either of the aforementioned concerns or flag any language that they believed to be problematic in the few conversations we had with them. My staff repeatedly offered to confer on any issue that majority staff may have with the bill and received nothing but radio silence.

It is important to note that we had an initial agreement in principle to move the COCOA Act together with the PAVA Act. However, at the eleventh hour, the majority reneged on our agreement in principle to move the COCOA Act forward. Again, here on the House Floor is the first time we are learning of any issues with the bill.

This bill benefits both sides of the aisle and serves as an additional layer of transparency

and integrity in the elections process. I am concerned that, without the COCOA Act in place this fall, the majority and minority's ability to execute this House's constitutional responsibility will continue to face serious challenges.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF THERESE McMILLAN

HON. MARK DESAULNIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 7, 2022

Mr. DESAULNIER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Therese McMillan as she retires from her role as Executive Director of the San Francisco Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

Throughout her career, Therese has dedicated herself to ensuring healthy and equitable transportation systems and corridors in communities across the San Francisco Bay. She began her work with MTC in 1984 and has served in nearly every position within the agency up until 2009. She then had the opportunity to work under the Obama Administration, serving as the Deputy Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), then went on to become the Acting Administrator from 2014 to 2016. After her federal work, Therese worked for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as their Chief Planning Officer until 2019, then returned to MTC as its new Executive Director.

Therese has played a pivotal role in uplifting the voices of women in the transportation sector across the country, including through her participation in WTS International and as their Woman of the Year in 2016. She has also provided a real-world perspective to the landscape of transportation, teaching transportation finance at the San Jose State University Norman Y. Mineta Transportation Institute during her MTC tenure.

Also during her time at the MTC, Therese has spearheaded several initiatives that have helped strengthen the San Francisco Bay Area's transportation systems to be more equitable and inclusive for all Bay Area residents. Under her leadership, MTC established an Equity Platform where the Commission strives to advance policies and make investments that will ensure all Bay Area residents, including historically underserved and marginalized groups, are considered when discussing our region's transit needs. Therese also demonstrated strong leadership guiding MTC through the COVID-19, overseeing the formation of the Blue Ribbon Transit Recovery Task Force which aims to improve the transit rider experience. She was also highly involved with the Resolution 3434 Regional Transportation Expansion Program, helping to establish minimum housing density targets near transit stations and prioritizing transit capital investments throughout the Bay Area.

I am grateful for Therese's dedication and compassion in striving to provide exceptional transportation services to Bay Area residents. Please join me in congratulating Therese on her retirement and her nearly three decades of service to our community.